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ABSTRACT

Guides for teaching oral and written Tewa to American Indian children in grades 1-6 as an integral part of the regular curriculum are presented. In the San Juan Elementary School trilingual program, the time spent teaching Tewa decreases with grade level--from 2 90-minute periods per day for first graders to 2 30-minute classes per week for sixth graders. As a result of this program, students have exhibited a greater sense of cultural identity and openness, as is evidenced by the fact that the children use Tewa in participating in classroom discussions. Also, children have been willing to reveal their Tewa names. The positive effects of this program have been confirmed by some of the parents. That the Tewa language abilities of Indian children be identified and that the bilingual approach be designed according to their needs are suggestions for future programs. (HBC)

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# REPORT ON TEWA PORTION OF TRILINGUAL PROGRAM AT SAN JUAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1971-1972

Randall H. Speirs

This past year the program provided the following:

First Grade: Two twenty-minute periods a day in which oral Tewa was taught. Since there were two first grade classes, each was given a separate period in the morning, but they were combined in the afternoon. The children were taught a) a number of translated children's songs (This is the way we...". "Good morning to you", "Three Blind Mice", etc.) plus an analogous Tewa one); c) arithmetic, involving counting to 100, counting objects, doing simple addition and subtraction; d) about 120 nouns, including body parts, animals, people, common objects; e) colors; f) greetings and leave-takings; g) a number of verbs that could be acted out (go, come, enter, exit, sit, stand, etc.) plus a number of others that were useful for ordinary classroom activity (give, pass, turn on light, etc.); h) verbal pronominal prefixes which indicate person and number (there are some 55 of these in Tewa, occurring in several groups which depend on whether the verb is transitive or intransitive, indicative or imperative, etc.; about 30 of the most commonly used ones were taught); i) recognition and use of the children's Indian names, and use of respectful Tewa terms of address to elders.

Second Grade: One twenty-minute period per day for each of the three 2nd grade classes. Content same as for 1st grade.

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Third Grade: For each of the three 3rd grade classes, one half hour period per week of reading and writing Tewa, plus counting to 100 and doing simple arithmetic problems in Tewa. The 3rd graders completed most of the Tewa Reading Book, covering all consonants, vowels, and nasalization, but did not study tone. Besides reading, the children drilled in class on recognition and writing of Tewa syllables. Weekly written assignments were given to reinforce what they learned in class.

Fourth grade: Two classes, each meeting half hour per week. Course content same as for 3rd grade, excepting that they completed the Reading Book and did a bit more in assignments.

Fifth Grade: Three classes, each meeting half hour per week. Same as for 4th grade, except that their written assignments were more intensive.

Sixth Grade: Two classes meeting jointly two half hour periods per week, giving 6th graders one hour per week instead of half hour. Although the resultant larger class afforded less time for individualized help, it was felt that alloting double the time was justifiable in that these students would be leaving the Tewa program (unless something is established for them in Jr. and Sr. High), and that they needed the extra time to gain greater reading fluency. They completed the Tewa Reading Book and read four narratives from Tewa tales. Their arithmetic and written assignments were harder than those for 5th grade.

At Christmastime, all grades learned Tewa Christmas carols.

Mrs. Esther Martinez of San Juan Pueblo, a fluent speaker of Tewa and one thoroughly acquainted with the alphabet and reading

materials, was originally hired as an aide to help with some Tewa in the classroom of the first and second grades. As the program evalved to include a separate classroom for more intensive oral instruction for all of these classes, and then expanded to include the reading and writing program for the third through sixth grades, Mrs. Martinez actually functioned a good deal of the time as a classroom teacher. Toward the end of the school year she devoted some time each day to training two other Tewa aides so that they would be prepared to help in the program in case of either emergency or expansion.

Dr. Randall H. Speirs, consultant for the program, spent time before the course began, working with Mrs. Martinez in the preparation of materials, and then spent 30 to 40 hours per month in the classroom preparing materials, and observing and guiding Mrs. Martinez in her teaching (and, incidentally, learning much from her!). In addition, some time was spent in helping Mrs. Martinez become analytically concious of the phonological and grammatical structure of Tewa.

## APPRAISAL OF THE PROGRAM

To make an objective appraisal of the project is a difficult task for more than one reason. In the first place, the writer of this report strongly believes in bilingual education, and would tend to see the roses instead of the thorns in any bilingual program, particularly at this stage of the game - - this is, after all, a first for the Indian children of our area. In the second place, the writer has been the consultant for the program and a close friend of the teacher, making objectivity doubly hard. In the third place, an objective apprisal would be difficult because of a lack of a "before" and "after" battery of tests. As explained above, there was a gradual evolution of the total program rather than a definite beginning. Finally, it should be realized that not all benefits are objectively ascertainable. Attitudes are a difficult thing to quantify. If there has accrued a benefit in this area alone, the writer would count the program a success.

With these caveats in mind a few things may be said. Objectively, since grades 3-6 knew absolutely nothing about reading and writing Tewa beforehand, anything learned in this area is on the plus side of the ledger. The fact that several 6th graders became fairly fluent readers of Tewa folk tales is worth noting. The fact that some did not quite get over the hump to be independent readers is worth correcting--see suggestions below. One first grader who was counted as being a borderline Special Education case made remarkable progress when given personal attention in Tewa.

Subjectively, several things might be noted. A third grade

teacher stated that her Tewa students were much more open about owning their identity and were openly willing to share their Tewa names--something she could not get them to do last year. (While on the subject of teachers, most of these were quite enthusiastic about the program, some wondering why more time could not be devoted to it.) The smaller children were often heard singing the Tewa songs and repeating things they had learned in Tewa class (some of the non-Indian children picked up a few of these things from them in an informal class. Some mothers told how the little ones were teaching their older siblings (beyond 6th grade) how to count in Tewa. All ages were eager to learn and sing the Tewa Christmas carols. A project involving reconstrution of a pueblo model was enthusiastically completed. There was freedom for the children to come into the Tewa classroom at odd hours and discuss things in the language with Mrs. Martinez and many did so. Dressing in Indian costumes for participation in programs was eagerly engaged in.

A note in passing: Because of the consultant's presence in the classroom and speaking to the children in Tewa, and despite his obvious fair skin and red hair, one fifth grader thought him to be a Tewa! Several others felt quite free to talk to him in Tewa.

Suggestions for continuation of the program

First it would be well to analyze the language abilities of the children. Indians come to the classroom with one of three levels of ability in Tewa:

1. Speak and understand
2. Understand but do not speak
3. Neither speak nor understand

These categories are not rigid and can shape into one other. E. g., a child in category 2 may actually be able to say some things in the language, but does not do so customarily; and "understand" can obviously be a sliding scale involving everything from routine everyday matters to whole discourses. But it is generally the case that those having the latter degree of understanding will have it because the language is functional in their daily lives, and they therefore also speak it (thus placing them in category 1). It was found, as a matter of fact, that the three levels suggested did provide a quite valid working framework for categorizing the children. Number of children in each category for each level is summerized in the following chart.

| category | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 3 | 3 | 5 |
| 2 | 2 | 6 | 16 |
| 3 | 5 | 5 | 9 |
| 4 | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| 5 | 9 | 2 | 9 |
| 6 | 8 | 7 | 7 |

(Several other children were involved in the program the first semester only, when they transferred to the Day School. Of the some 9 involved, 5 were category 1 and 4 were category 2.)

With the foregoing in mind, various suggestions for improvement of the Tewa program for the coming year might include the following:

1. As an ideal, there three categories of language ability should separate the children into three learning tracks. Those of category 1 could be given more subject matter instruction in Tewa (e.g., arithmetic, social studies, etc.) to both reinforce the subject matter per se, and to give the children confidence in the value of Tewa ("self-image" value). Those in category 2 could be given some to the same material as in 1, but with more emphasis on practice in the language per se, specially to bring out latent speaking abilities. Category 3 children would need specially designed drill to teach them the fundamentals of the language. Subject matter would not be emphasized, but would come in incidentally as it might lend itself to language. Grades 1 and 2 would continue a completely oral approach. Grades 3 through 6 would, as in the past year, include reading and writing in their program.

2. At the other end of the scale, the basis program of the past year could simply be repeated, going on in each grade level from the terminal point of achievement of each previous grade level (i.e., next year's grade 6 would pick up, after review, from where this year's grade 5 left off, etc.).

3. Perhaps the practical realities fo the situation, particularly in reference to available trained help, will dictate a

course less than the ideal, but will also permit some movement towards it. It is suggested that the minimum step taken be that more classroom time per child be allotted, with the exception of first grade. Specifically, it is suggested that two 15 or 20 minute periods per day be given to the second grade and that three half hour periods (or their equivalent) per week be given to grades 3-6. It is still felt preferable to divide the first and second grades into smaller groups for part of their instruction to allow for more personal help. The anticipated size of classes for grades 3-6 would seem to make combination of classes in each grade level feasible. This can be basically effected by the simple expedient of combining classes (as was done this year with the 6th grade). Since the general curriculum calls for approximately 1 1/2 hours/week of "enrichment", for upper grades and 200 minutes per week for primary grades, a good portion or all of this time could be alloted to Tewa. This would not only allow more time for Tewa language instruction as such, but would also permit time for activities (handcrafts, art, etc.) which would be culturally relevant. These activities could, of course, also serve as a matrix for language use.

4. As a second step up the ladder towards the ideal, it is suggested that an aide be assigned to help with the classes. This would provide someone to give individual help to slow learners, and would also furnish the always welcome helping hands for any art or craft projects.

5. Stepping up one more rung, if the aide were supplied, some attempt could be made to actually separate the children into tracks according to their language-ability categories. Making this

really effective, of course, would involve some separating device in the classroom to cut down on noise level, since more oral interchange would be going on.

Since the ultimate ideal suggested is not expected to be reached at this time because of the aforementioned lack of fully trained personnel, and also lack of classroom facilities, we will simply view it as something to keep aiming at, and suggest that there be a grudging spirit to abandon it only for now. It could be also hoped that there be serious thought given to further opportunity for Tewa language and culture study in Jr. and/or Sr. High School.

Postcript

In this past school year, of the total San Juan Elementary School enrollment, approximately 30% came from homes in which at least one parent was classified as Indian. With but few exceptions, all of the other children were from homes in which the parents can or do speak Spanish. The writer sincerely hopes, therefore, that similar time and effort be expended this coming year in the Spanish portion of the program. With the wealth of Spanish speaking teachers and aides available, it should not be too great a task to initiate a structured program that would allot enough time to oral Spanish in the lower grades, and both oral and written Spanish in the upper grades. It is hoped that the Espanola Municipal school system will make every effort to fund, staff, and encourage such a program.